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CHEETAH GAMINI CAN NOW BE SPOTTED BY TOURISTS IN SAFARI

South African cheetah Gamini and her 4 cubs were released into the wild in the Khajuri forest area at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh on Monday

17 BIG CATS NOW RELEASED INTO THE WILD

Their release raised the number of cheetahs in the wild to 17. Nine others are still in the enclosures. On February 21, cheetah Jwala and her four cubs were released into the wild in KNP. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav hailed the development as an important day in the cheetah project and wildlife conservation

PROJECT GOING STRONG FOR OVER 2 YEARS

- PM Modi initiated the translocation project with eight cheetahs brought from Namibia released into KNP in September 2022. This marked the first-ever intercontinental translocation of the big cats
- Gamini gave birth to six cubs in her first litter on March 10, 2024, officials said. Two of the cubs, however, died in subsequent months

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CHEETAHS IN KNP NOW, INCLUDING 14 CUBS BORN ON INDIAN SOIL

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

PARKING BRAWL

Army Col, son assaulted by Punjab cops, 12 suspended

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

A serving army Colonel and his son were allegedly assaulted by Punjab Police personnel in Patiala in the wee hours of March 14 over a parking dispute. The incident, caught on CCTV, left the Colonel with a fractured arm and his son with severe head injuries.

Following an outrage over the incident, Punjab Police on Monday suspended 12 policemen, including three inspectors, and ordered a departmental probe against them.

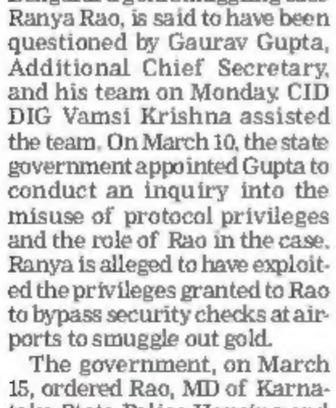
Sources said Colonel Pushpinder Bath, currently posted at the army headquarters in New Delhi, said he and his son were assaulted in the wee hours of March 14 by policemen posted in Patiala. The incident took place outside a roadside eatery near the hospital where Bath and his son had stopped for refreshments.

It is alleged that the three police personnel, who were in plain clothes, asked the army officer to remove his car so that they could park their vehicle. When the officer objected to their tone, the cops allegedly assaulted him as well as his son with baseball bats and some sharp-edged weapons.

One of the policemen claimed that it was the Colonel and his son who attacked them first. "They were inebriated and attacked us," he claimed.

Jaswinder Bath, Col Bath's wife, claimed that the family is being asked to compromise or face dire consequences. This comes two days after the Patiala police registered an FIR against unidentified men for a brawl near Rajindra Hospital, based on a written complaint from the army officer.

It is learnt that senior army officials from Delhi visited the hospital for a status check.



Son of Colonel Pushpinder Singh Bath at a hospital. The Patiala SSP issued an apology to the officer's family | X

Govt turns the screws on Khalistani radicals

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his New Zealand counterpart Christopher Luxon in New Delhi | SHEKHAR YADAV

'Rein in anti-India elements in NZ'

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Monday raised the issue of pro-Khalistan elements freely carrying out anti-India activities in New Zealand during his bilateral meeting with the Pacific island nation's PM Christopher Luxon.

Modi called for strict action against those guilty of terrorist attacks. "We will continue to cooperate together against terrorist, separatist and radical elements," he said.

Separately, the Ministry of External Affairs said the issue of Khalistan supporters getting space in New Zealand was discussed between the two leaders. "This was an issue that came up. We do alert our friends to the activities of anti-India elements in their countries and their abuse of freedom of speech and other democratic freedoms to glorify terrorism, and to threaten attacks against our diplomats or our parliament or our events in India. So these were also conveyed," said Jaideep Mazumdar, secretary (east) in the Ministry of External Affairs, adding New Zealand was receptive to India's concerns.

> We have shared our concerns about anti-India activities by certain illegal elements in New Zealand. We're confident we will receive the full cooperation of the New Zealand govt
>
> Narendra Modi

India has been flagging various pro-Khalistan activities, including the so-called 'referendum' for an independent Sikh homeland organised by the pro-Khalistan group, Sikhs for Justice, permitted by New Zealand authorities under the guise of 'freedom of speech'.

Modi and Luxon held wide-ranging talks with a focus on ramping up overall bilateral ties. The two sides also inked six pacts to firm up defence and security ties, and cooperation in education, sports, agriculture and climate change.

India and New Zealand have also decided to start negotiations for a free trade pact. "This shall increase the potential for bilateral trade and investment. Mutual cooperation and investment shall be encouraged in fields such as dairy, food processing, and pharma," Modi said.

New Zealand is keen to have greater access to India's lucrative dairy market, which has been traditionally protected to support farmers.

Luxon arrived in Delhi on Sunday on a five-day visit to explore ways to deepen ties.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during a meeting with USA's Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard | PTI

Gabbard urged to ban Pannun's SFJ

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday conveyed to US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, India's concerns over activities of Khalistani separatist group, Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), on American soil and urged her to declare it as a designated terrorist entity, sources said.

In an over 30-minute meeting at his office in the Raisina Hills, Singh apprised Gabbard about SFJ's alleged links with Pakistani spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) as well as its "collaboration" with the Babbar Khalsa terrorist group, and pressed for action against it, sources said.

Singh flagged concerns over the SFJ, headed by Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, vandalising various Hindu religious structures in the US and said such radicalism must be stopped, the sources added.

> Drawing from the joint statement issued after the recent Modi-Trump meeting, the discussions reaffirmed the growing strength of the India-US bilateral defence partnership
>
> Ministry of Defence

The SFJ is a banned organisation in India. Gurpatwant Singh Pannun is wanted by Indian probe agencies on various terror charges.

During the discussion, both countries also explored avenues for collaboration in cutting-edge defence innovation and niche technologies.

In a statement, the Ministry of Defence said, "Drawing from the joint statement issued after the recent meeting of PM Narendra Modi with US President Donald Trump, the discussions reaffirmed the growing strength of the India-US bilateral defence partnership."

Both leaders emphasised that strategic security remains a vital pillar of the comprehensive global strategic cooperation between the two nations.

"Rajnath and Gabbard reviewed the significant strides made in the areas of military exercises, strategic cooperation, integration of defence industrial supply chains and information-sharing cooperation, especially in the maritime domain, between India and the US," MoD added.

The two leaders addressed key areas such as enhancing interoperability and fostering greater integration of defence industrial supply chains to bolster resilience and innovation.

Manipur tense as Kuki-Zo leader mugged, prohibitory orders out

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

PROHIBITORY orders under Section 163 of BNSS were clamped in Manipur's Kuki-dominated Churachandpur district following a senior Kuki-Zo leader's assault.

Richard Hmar, general secretary of Hmar Inpui and a member of Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), was assaulted by unknown miscreants late on Sunday inside the campus of V K Montessori School in Zenhang. Hmar is currently undergoing medical treatment due to excessive bleeding and injuries.

Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) empowers district magistrates to issue preventive orders in urgent cases of public nuisance or apprehended danger to prevent harm to individuals or public safety.

Authorities clamped prohibitory orders following reports from the Churachandpur SP.

Ethnic violence case moved to Guwahati

The Supreme Court on Monday ruled that the trial of the Manipur ethnic violence cases, probed by the CBI, will take place in Guwahati, Assam, where they were transferred to earlier. The court has instructed the Chief Justice of the Guwahati High Court to assign judicial officers to manage these cases

Unauthorised processions or unlawful assemblies of five or more persons were banned, as well as carrying of arms or objects which can be used as life-threatening weapons.

District magistrate Dharun Kumar S said, "...Our attention has been drawn to incidents where disputes are escalating in some areas, leading to unrest that threatens the peaceful coexistence of our citizens."

Throughout the day, protesters attempted to enforce a shutdown, urging shops to close immediately. Groups of men patrolled the streets with sticks, while clashes between the Hmar and Zomi communities led to stone pelting in multiple areas of the district headquarters. Personnel of the Central security forces intervened, firing gunshots in the air to disperse mobs, officials said.

The Hmar Inpui said the victim was caught by a group of men on his way home, blindfolded and beaten up even after he had revealed his identity. The organisation asked the perpetrators to give in or face consequences.

The Thadou Students' Association expressed concern over escalating tensions between different groups among the non-Naga tribal communities, particularly between Kuki/Kuki-Zo, Hmar and Zomi groups.

The ITLF has also condemned the incident.

Assembly plunges into chaos over CM's remarks against RSS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Legislative Assembly witnessed pandemonium on Monday when Opposition BJP legislators took strong exception to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's remarks against RSS.

The House resumed proceedings only after Speaker UT Khader expunged the CM's remarks against RSS and those by BJP legislators against the ruling Congress.

In his reply to the governor's address, Siddaramaiah claimed that the law and order situation in the state is better when compared to that of the previous BJP government. Presenting a comparative data, Siddaramaiah made some remarks against RSS. Taking strong exception to Siddramaiah's remarks, Leader of Opposition R Ashoka demanded that they be expunged. "Even our prime minister and home minister are from the RSS background. The CM should withdraw his remarks and the speaker expunge them," he said.

Meanwhile, BJP legislators raised slogans against Congress by naming its senior leader Sonia Gandhi and LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi. KM Shivalinge Gowda of BJP, who was presiding over the proceedings, adjourned the House twice.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah makes a point in the Assembly in Bengaluru on Monday | EXPRESS

When the House resumed proceedings, Siddaramaiah defended himself saying that he did not use any unparliamentary language against RSS, except wishing that it should not incite trouble in the state. He accepted Khader's ruling on expunging his remarks.

BJP MLAs alleged that the Siddaramaiah government is acting as an agent of SDPI and PFI by withdrawing criminal cases against some members of these organisations. But the government categorically denied it.

CONTINUED ON P4

Four held for moral policing in Belagavi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Belagavi

Four people were arrested early Monday for moral policing at Savgaon on the outskirts of Belagavi city on Sunday. Efforts are on to nab two more accused in the case, according to police. A group of six people allegedly assaulted a youth for speaking to a girl from another community on Sunday. Allauddin Peerzade, the victim, who rushed to the local police station with torn clothes and wounds, filed a complaint against the accused.

Acting swiftly, the police arrested Santosh Jadhav and Sudesh Patil from Savgaon, and Sumit More and Jay Inchal from Angol. A police officer told *TNIE* that two other accused will be arrested soon.

Meanwhile, residents of Savgaon staged a protest on Monday against immoral activities in their village.

They submitted a memorandum at the deputy commissioner's office alleging that many boys and girls from the city come to Savgaon and indulge in immoral activities, causing nuisance to them. They also alleged that youths drink alcohol, smoke ganja and take drugs. Residents urged officials to take steps to prevent immoral activities in their village.

GOLD SMUGGLING CASE

DGP Rao quizzed by Gupta probe team

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

DGP K Ramachandra Rao, stepfather of prime accused in the Bengaluru gold smuggling case Ranya Rao, is said to have been questioned by Gaurav Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary, and his team on Monday. CID DIG Vamsi Krishna assisted the team. On March 10, the state government appointed Gupta to conduct an inquiry into the misuse of protocol privileges and the role of Rao in the case. Ranya is alleged to have exploited the privileges granted to Rao to bypass security checks at airports to smuggle out gold.

The government, on March 15, ordered Rao, MD of Karnataka State Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation, to go on compulsory leave.

Ranya's bail plea adjourned

The hearing of the fresh bail petition filed by Ranya was adjourned to March 19.

The sessions court directed the counsel of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence to file objections by the next hearing. After Ranya's initial bail petition was dismissed by the Special Court for Economic Offences on March 14, her advocates filed a fresh bail petition before the sessions court. The hearing of the bail petition of Tarun Konduru Raju, an associate of Ranya, was adjourned by the Special Court for Economic Offences to Tuesday.

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18 SEASONS ON, HOPE LIVES ON

Fans cheer for the Royal Challengers Bengaluru during the RCB Unbox event at M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Monday evening. This year's IPL will kick off on March 22 with RCB playing KKR in Kolkata | SRASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

EXPRESS READ

China hails PM's 'dialogue over discord' statements

New Delhi: China on Monday welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent comments on India-China relations in conversation with American podcaster Lex Fridman emphasising that dialogue, not discord, should steer bilateral ties | P9

Rumours of holy book burning, Nagpur erupts

Mumbai: Violence erupted in Nagpur on Monday after members of Hindu outfits, including the Vishva Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal, held a protest seeking the removal of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's tomb in Sambhaji Nagar | P10

Dr Debendra Pradhan, ex-Union min, no more

New Delhi: BJP leader and former Union minister Dr Debendra Pradhan, 84, passed away at the official residence of his son Union Education minister Dharmendra Pradhan in New Delhi on Monday. The veteran BJP leader was suffering from age-related illness | P7

ONE POLL UNCONSTITUTIONAL, SAYS AP SHAH

Deposing before the JPC examing the one nation, one poll Bill, former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court submitted a 12-page note asserting that the Bill is violative of the Constitution | P9